

MISSIONS

TODAY



MISSIONS

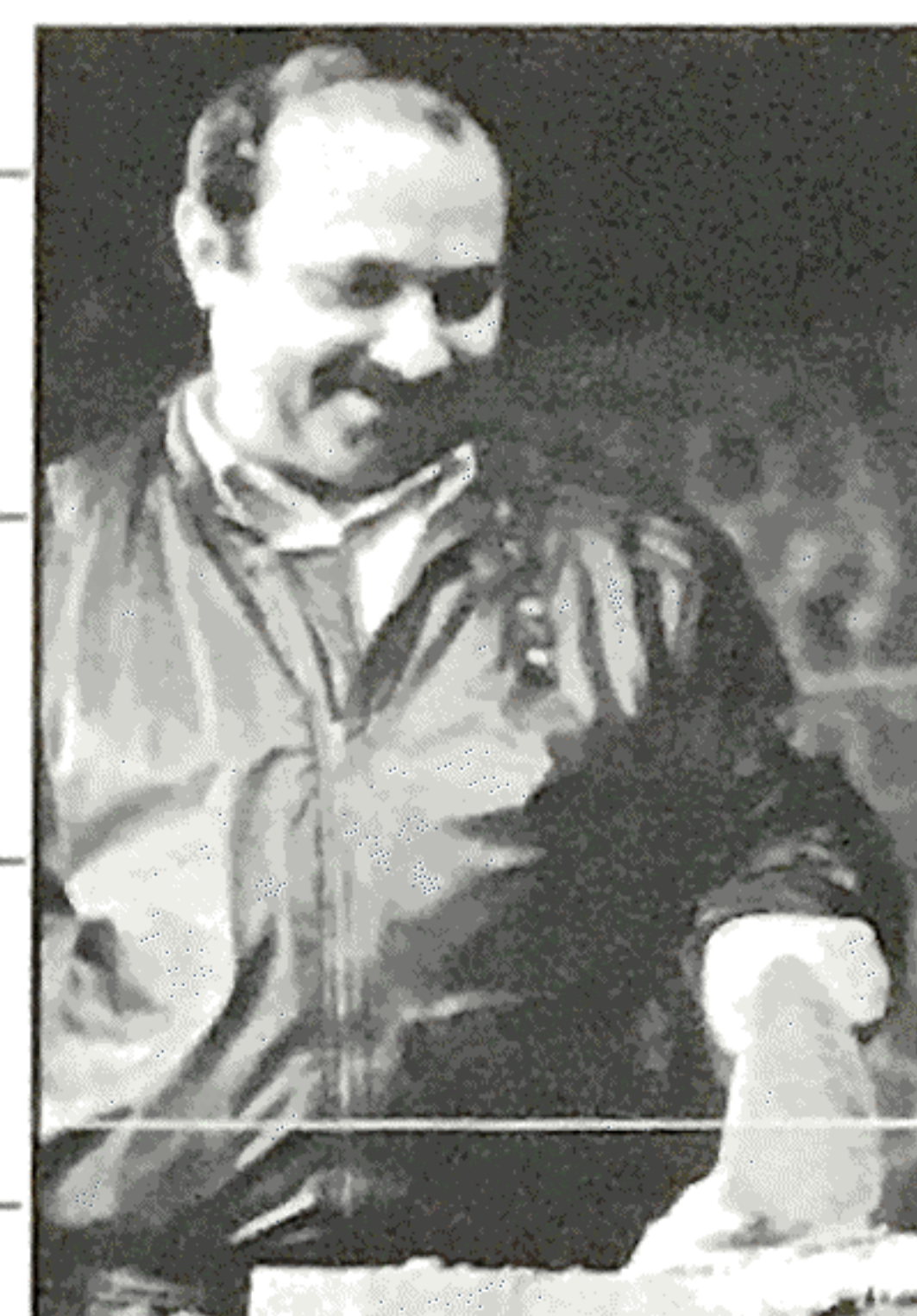
TODAY

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COVER: A Polish lad in Warsaw is surrounded by evidence of political change. Sweeping social and political changes in Eastern Europe have created unparalleled ministry opportunities. See stories on pages 8, 10 and 14. Photograph by Steven D. Reece

DREAMER of DREAMS

*One man's vision became
a gospel catalyst in Poland.*

By Steven D. Reece

South Vietnam falls, Margaret Thatcher becomes the first woman prime minister of Great Britain and the Cincinnati Reds win the World Series. These were major news stories in 1975.

In the same year, tucked away in a forgotten corner of Eastern Europe, Adam Wojnarowski began to dream.

William Carey said, "Expect great things from God and do great things for God." Adam did. His vision was to use the radio to communicate the gospel of Jesus Christ to his fellow Poles. Poland was still in the grasp of the iron fist of communism. To some, his dream was a fantasy.

The dream became a reality when the Communist government became more open to Christianity. Adam seized the opportunity to begin broadcasting Christian radio programs.

He had worked for the Polish telephone company as an electronics technician. Active in the Baptist church

in Warsaw, he led the choir and youth group. But he felt that there was something more that God wanted him to do.

"I knew that God wanted me to use all my skills and abilities in service to Him. When I learned about this opportunity, I began to pray about it," he says.

**"The most important
purpose for my life (is) to
serve Him by spreading the
Good News ... to the lost
people of Poland."**

The government was going to allow radio broadcasts by evangelicals and the Roman Catholic Church. The man of vision became a man with a mission.

"I decided to become part of this

ministry and gave up my work with the choir and youth group. I felt that God was showing me the most important purpose for my life. I was to serve Him by spreading the Good News of Jesus Christ to the lost people of Poland and the world," he says.

The government gave the Baptists air time once or twice a month on Sunday evenings.

"In the beginning, my work was very exciting and I had a deep passion and commitment to it," says Adam.

"However, it wasn't very long after I started that I began to face a lot of difficulties."

Without any broadcast experience or professional equipment, Adam's private apartment was their first studio.

"I had to wait until it was late at night, when it was quiet to make our recordings," he says.

That was 16 years ago. Today, he uses a studio in the administration building of the Polish Baptist Union in Warsaw.



Adam Wojnarowski produces a radio program in a studio apartment at the Polish Baptist Union's administration building in Warsaw.

The equipment is more professional but still hard to find. Normally he works alone on the technical aspects of the recordings. His son-in-law, Andrej Severyn, the pastor of the Baptist church in Bialystok, handles the content.

The ministry has been productive. Adam says that from the beginning this ministry has touched the lives of many Polish listeners.

"We know this because of the large amount of daily correspondence we receive from people seeking answers to

their spiritual questions," says Adam. "We have had many occasions to visit some of them in their homes and to share the plan of salvation."

"Today we can see a deeper interest in our society in biblical subjects than a few years ago. Our churches have many people, that have become believers in Jesus Christ because of this ministry. For some, the radio message was the first time that they had heard about Jesus," he adds.

Though retired, Adam continues the relentless pursuit of his dream. One day he hopes to pioneer the development of a radio station and TV programs for the Polish Baptist Union.

"God is opening doors right now for us to move forward but we do not have enough people or financial support to start this work. I am praying for God to give us more people to help us," he says.

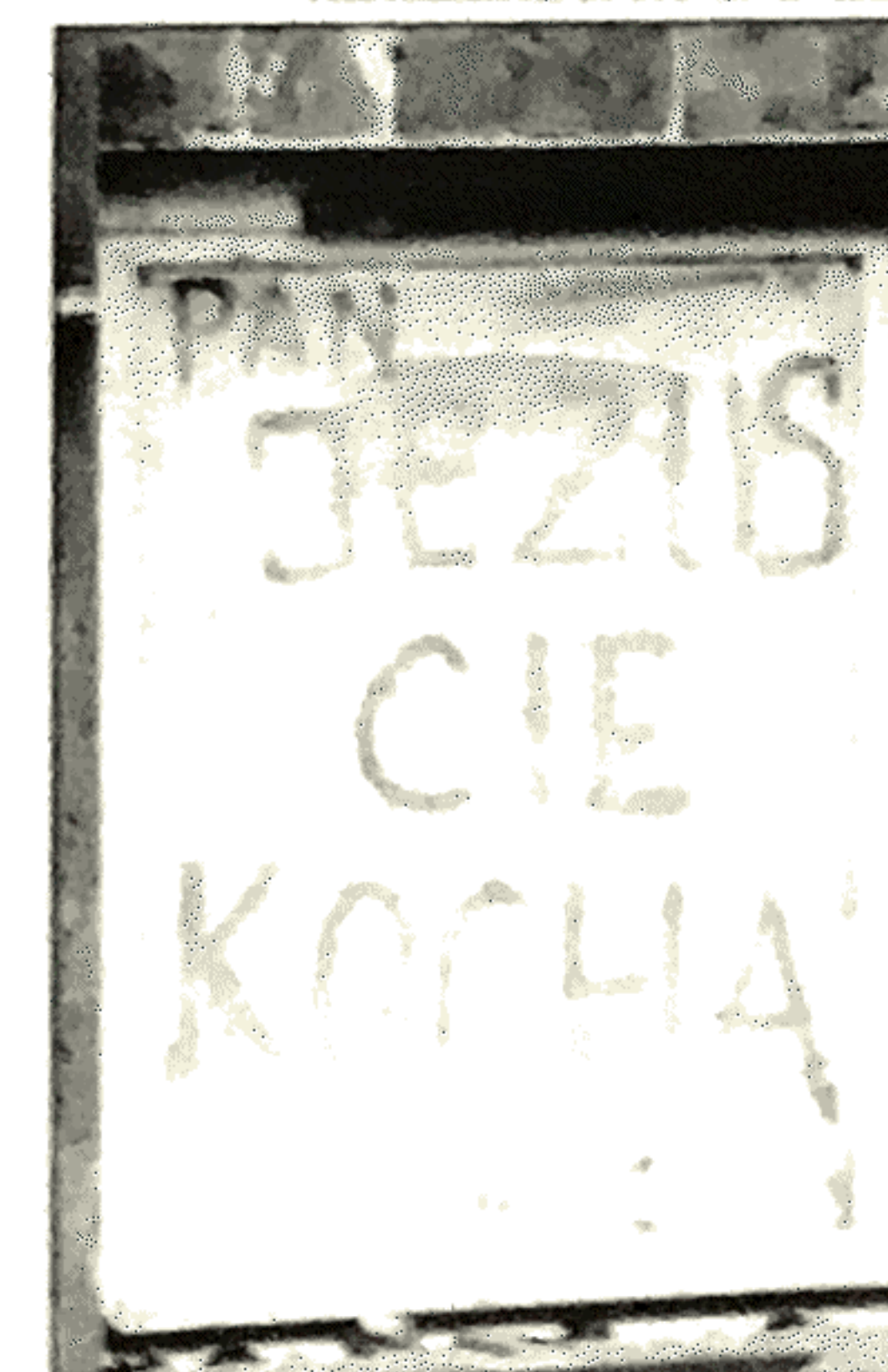
Adam may be a dreamer but he doesn't live in the clouds.

"Everything that I'm doing is a great joy and sacrifice to God," he says. "I feel that He is always giving us new opportunities. I realize that we have a great responsibility in being faithful to Him by keeping the radio ministry on His path."

Steven D. Reece is a staff photographer at the Waco Tribune-Herald.

TIME TO MINISTER

PHOTOGRAPHS BY STEVEN D. REECE



A window at Radesc reads "The Lord Jesus loves you."



Ilya Mirza lays brick in a classroom at the Polish Baptist Union's Baptist Seminary at Radesc.

Ilya Mirza no longer kills time going to movies. He is too busy serving his Lord.

By Steven D. Reece

Growing up in the Soviet Union is tough. Life consists of shortages, long lines and broken promises. Many search for a way of escape. Some never find one. Ilya Mirza did. He found the movies.

Ilya, 37, spent hours at the local theater in his home of Kishinev, Moldavia, U.S.S.R., watching movies. He didn't care which movie just as long as he could kill a few hours.

Many times he remembers coming home and his mother saying to him, "Ilya, one day Jesus is going to come back. Where do you want Him to find you, in the theater watching movies or out doing His work? God loves you and wants to use you in His work. He wants you to serve Him."

After being discharged from the Soviet Army in 1974, he went to church. Soon he gave his life to Jesus Christ and became a member of a Baptist church.

"My greatest desire was for Jesus to take my life and use it to His honor and glory," he says. His life has never been the same.

Until a few years ago the life of a believer in the Soviet Union was very dangerous. It was not uncommon to have members of local churches disappear into prisons and insane asylums because of their belief in Jesus Christ.

Ilya lived and served Christ with the constant threat of imprisonment but this didn't stop him. In 1978, he began to

"Since we are God's servants, we expect to suffer for His purpose."

distribute smuggled Christian literature (Bibles, song books, gospel tracts, etc.) into Moldavia from West Germany. This was against the law of the atheistic Soviet system. The penalty was five years in prison.

"Both of my brothers were arrested and sent to prison for doing this. Since we are God's servants, we expect to suffer for His purpose," he says. "We decided to carry on with this ministry

because it was so important to our churches."

Traveling in a convoy of four cars in 1980, they encountered a police roadblock. The first car was stopped and searched and the driver was arrested. Ilya had to escape. He turned his car around and fled knowing that he could never see his wife, Nona, and his two children again.

For the next six years, he lived on the run in Moldavia and other parts of the Soviet Union.

"The Soviet Union is a very large country and it is easy to disappear," he says. "I lived with other believers and in churches wherever I went."

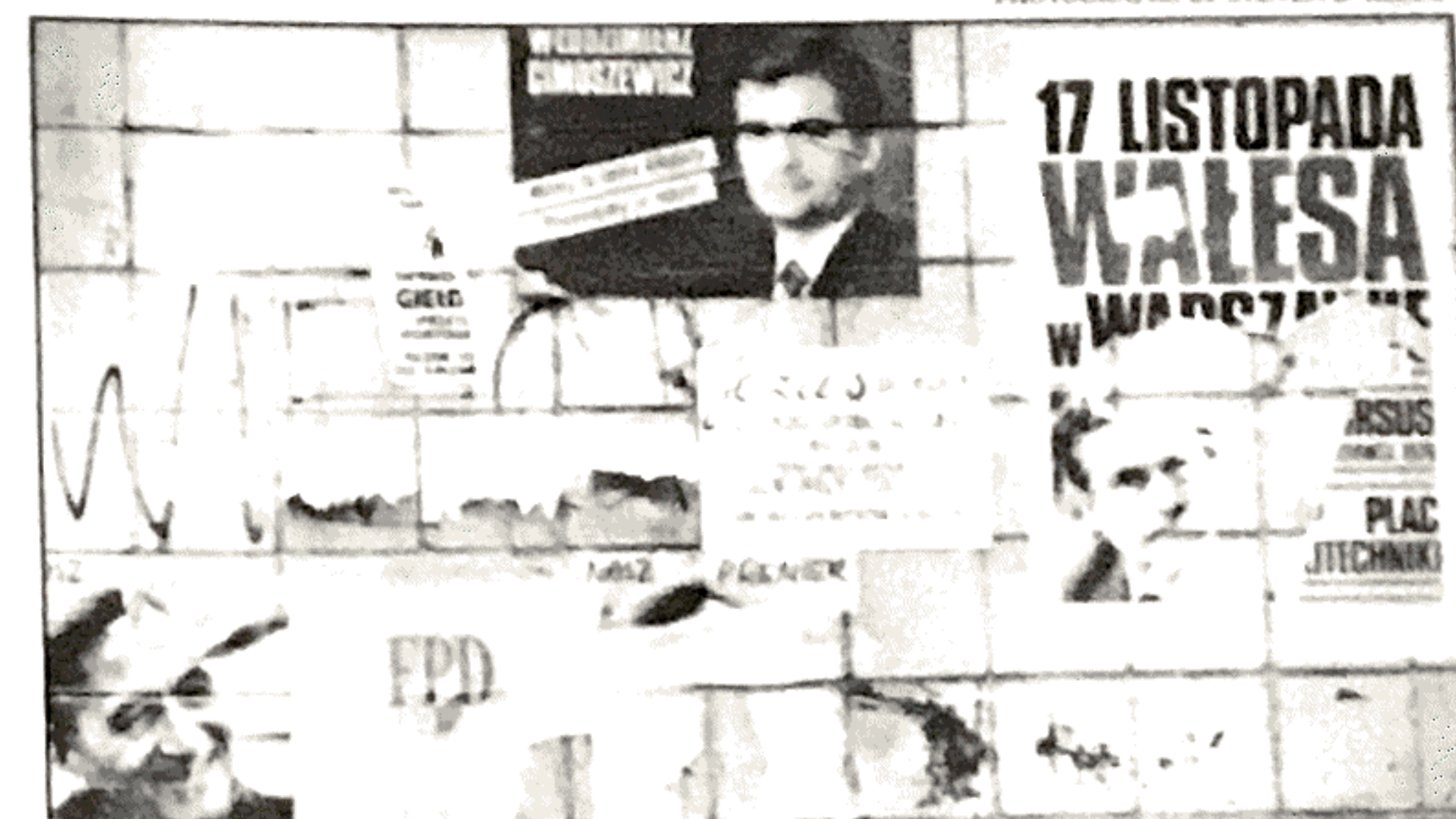
This all drastically changed in 1986 when Mikhail Gorbachev proclaimed liberation for all those who had suffered religious persecution. Ilya returned home to start rebuilding his life.

Ilya found a job with the government in construction. He felt God leading him to another area of ministry in construction work. God gave him a dream

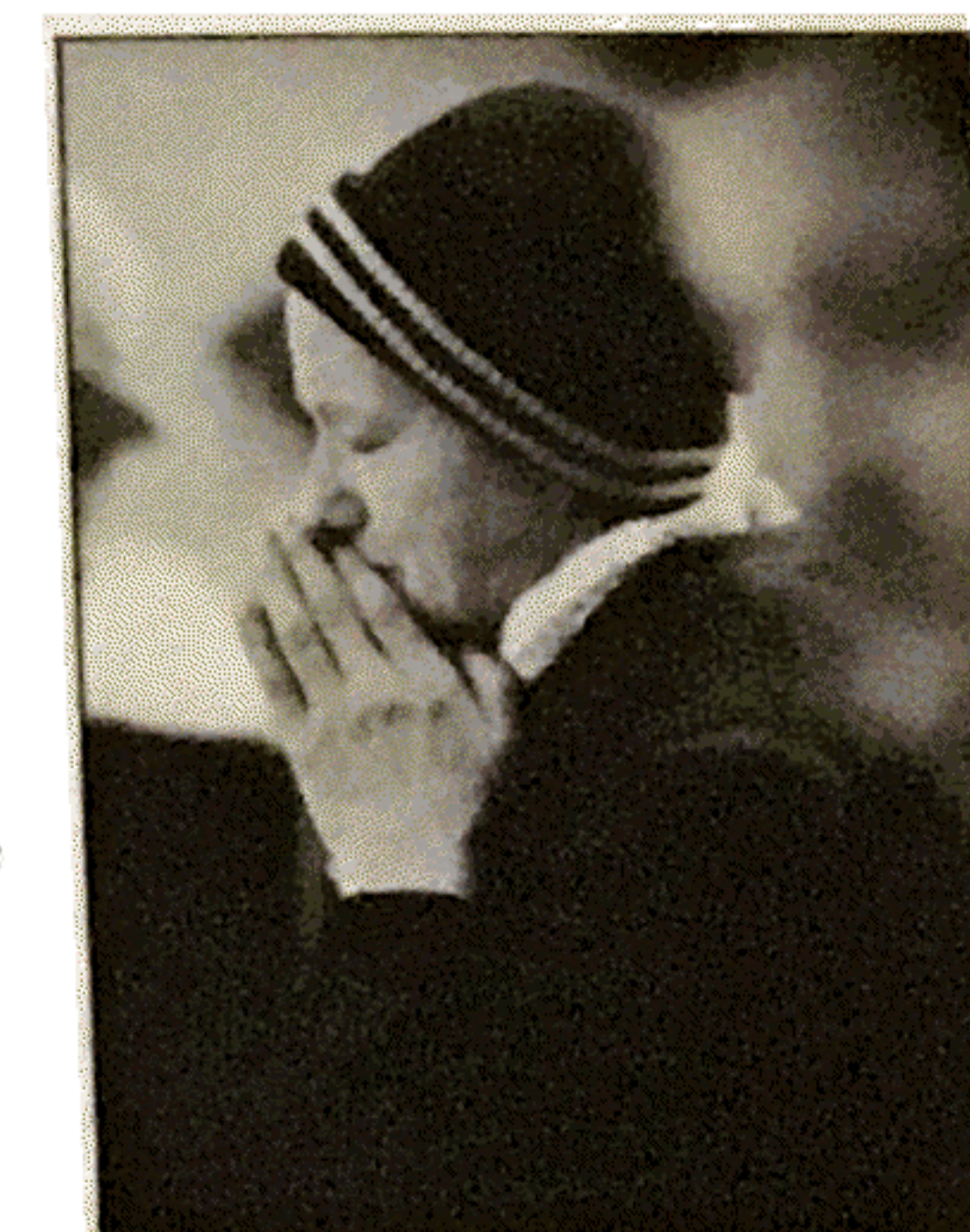
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Kazik Gutkowski mixes mortar for construction of the administration building's classrooms.



ABOVE, political wall posters seem to dominate a flyer that invites people to an evangelistic meeting at the Baptist Church in Warsaw. BELOW, a woman prays at the Baptist Church in Warsaw.



CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

of starting a private business that would allow opportunities for mission work. In 1988 he met three Christians on the job and he shared his dream with them. They wanted to be a part of this ministry.

"We sought the Lord in prayer together that He would open the door for us to begin this work," says Ilya.

With their association, the men made application with the Soviet government to form a private business called Contact. Ilya became vice president in charge of foreign economic relations after approval of this application. His duties included scouting potential construction jobs in neighboring countries.

"This was a daring move," says Michael Gott, a Southern Baptist evangelist who has ministered in Eastern Europe for about 20 years. "Ilya and these men stuck their neck out in making application for a private business in the Soviet Union, a communist country.

"Ilya did this as his commitment to Jesus Christ. He did it to give the Baptist workers of Moldavia job opportunities and job security so that they could provide for their families," continues Gott.

In May of 1990, Ilya was in Warsaw, Poland, where he heard of the construction of Baptist Seminary at Radosc (it means joy). He contacted the president of the Baptist Union, Konstanty Wiazowski. Konstanty asked him to provide labor to work with the Poles and North Carolina Baptist Men who

have a partnership with Poland. Ilya agreed and the first group arrived in June 1990. He supervised the Moldavians working at Radosc, coordinating their work with the other groups.

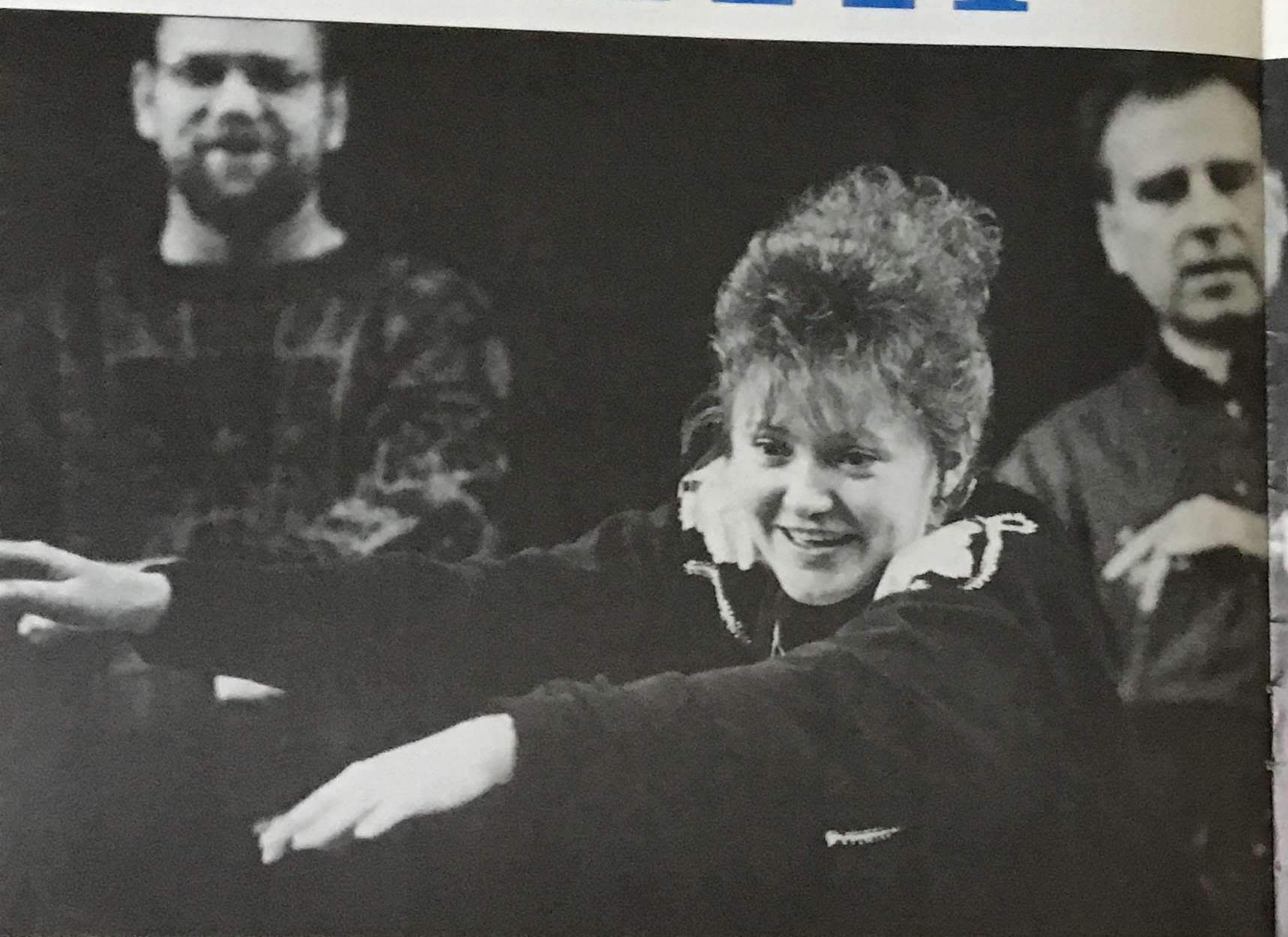
Working at Radosc means a great deal to Ilya.

"We are doing great work for God in building the seminary," says Ilya. "Our job as believers is to spread God's word and this place will prepare Polish young people to do His work."

Ilya anticipates returning to Poland this summer to complete the work. Then he will move on to the next task and if Jesus returns, Ilya will be found serving his Lord instead of watching movies at a local theater.

Steven D. Reece is a staff photographer at the Waco Tribune-Herald.

INTERPRETING FAITH



*Ewa Korytkowska
bridges the gap
between Soviet, Polish
and Southern Baptists.*

*Story and photographs by
Steven D. Reece*

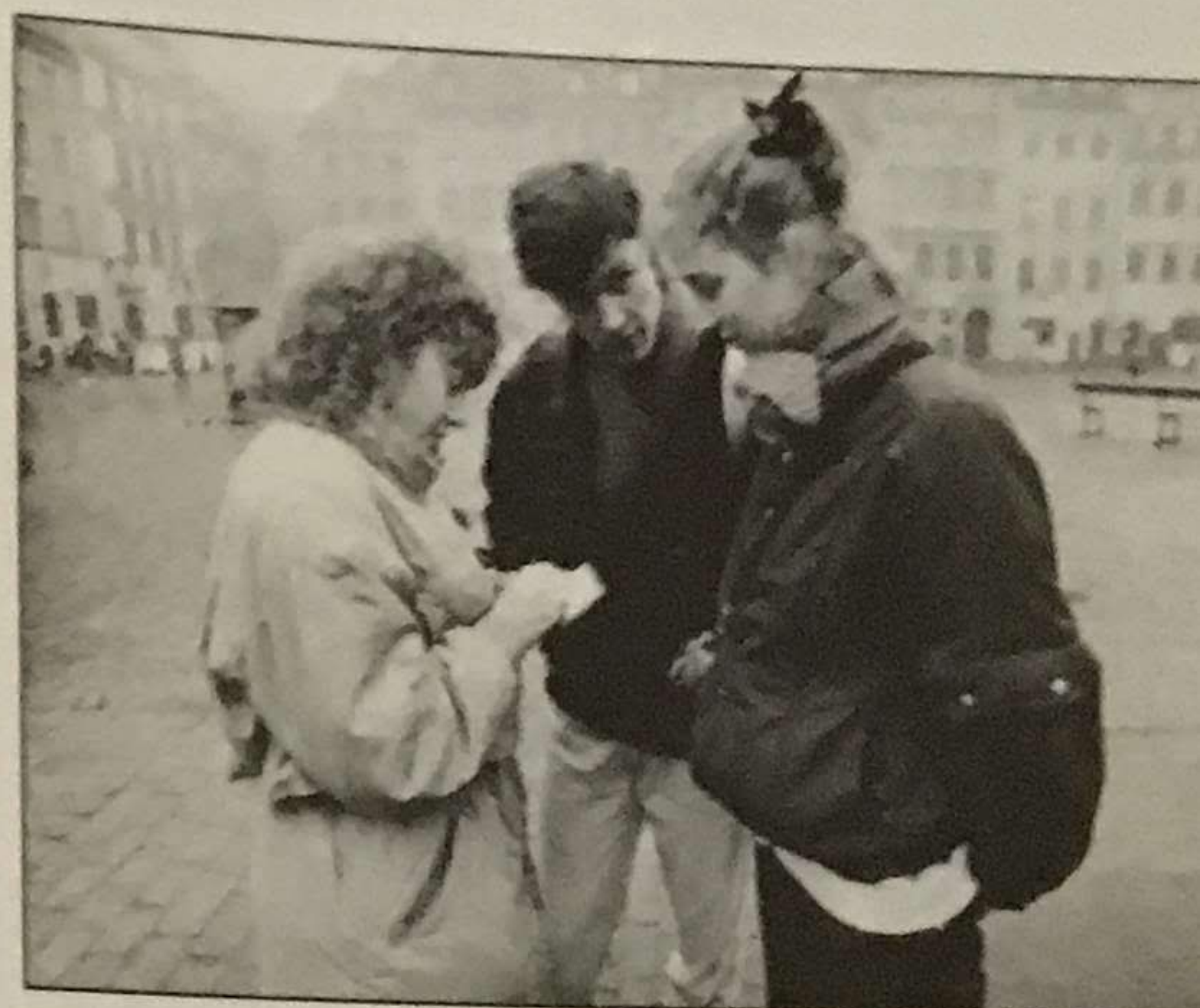
Michelangelo sculpted great works of art. He would transform a block of stone into a masterpiece, using only a hammer and a chisel. Common instruments in his masterful hands translated his vision into reality. But he was only a shadow of the true Master, Jesus Christ. An instrument in this Master's hands yields a work that will last forever. Ewa Korytkowska is one of those instruments.

Ewa (pronounced A-va), 26, lives in Poland, a country dominated until recently by 45 years of communist oppression. She has yielded herself as an instrument in the Master's hand to be used to chip away her country's heart of stone and carve out a niche for His church.

"I must be an instrument for God to use in pouring out His blessings through His son, Jesus Christ, on the lost people of Poland," she says. Ewa has served the Lord for just six years. It dramatically intensified over the last year and a half. Ewa, a Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board translator, has been instrumental in translating the Polish Baptist Union's vision of a seminary at Radosc (pronounced Radooshch) into reality.

It was an international effort involving Baptists from three different countries: Poland, Moldavia (a Soviet Republic) and the United States.

Ewa's association with the project began in the summer of 1989, when she met Skip Greene in Poland. Greene, 43, is the overseas mission coordinator for North Carolina Baptist Men. He was in



Ewa Korytkowska witnesses to Tomas and Ringa Pulsis in the Old Town of Warsaw. The Pulsis' are from Lithuania.

North Carolina Baptists have a partnership agreement with the Polish Baptist Union. They provide volunteers to help with the construction of the new seminary. After meeting Ewa, Skip learned that she would be coming to the United States in the fall on a mission exchange program sponsored by the Mennonites.

"I asked her if it would be possible for her to come to North Carolina to assist in the preparation of the volunteers for living and working in Poland," he says.

"During college I met Jesus through some Christian friends."

Ewa arrived in the United States in August 1989 and lived in Kansas for six months. In February 1990, she arrived at the Greene's home in Boone, N.C.

"She became a vital part of our family for the next six months," says Greene. "She helped me learn about the Polish people and their culture while living in our home. I tried to learn as much as possible on the do's and don'ts while I was in Poland."

Ewa's work in Boone centered on

"My responsibility was to represent the Polish Baptist Church in Boone," she says. "I shared my testimony with them. I told them what to expect once they were in Poland."

That is not all she did while in Boone. Ewa volunteered as a graphic artist in the ad department of the *Watauga Democrat*, a local newspaper. She also volunteered at the Baptist Student Union at Appalachian State University in Boone.

"It wasn't easy for her either. The culture shock was tremendous and she had to make many adjustments to our way of life," says Greene.

Greene says she encountered many things that shocked her.

"She was saddened by the lack of depth and commitment in our daily walk with Christ," he recalls.

"She had no reservations in sharing her faith wherever she went in America or Poland."

Ewa's major task at Radosc was translating. She did not start out to be a translator. Her formal university training was in interior and graphic design.

"During college I met Jesus through some Christian friends," says Ewa.

She knows that after her work as a translator, God will direct her path.

"I feel like I have to spend more time in quietness before God. Through prayer I know that He will show me the direction for my future," she says.

Baptist
Young Men

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WITNESS AT HOME & ABROAD



Pat Harris, second from left, sits among Russian children in the balcony of the Baptist church in Brest.

Seeing All God's Children

A short-term mission trip to Poland and the Soviet Union opened Pat Harris' eyes to a new world of believers.

by Steve Reece

Pat Harris was blind. For 35 years he thought he could see, but he couldn't. His eyes had been veiled by a curtain of iron; his vision obscured. Things were hidden from him and the rest of the world.

The curtain is melting. The flames of glasnost are racing across its path. The macrocosm of the Soviet Union and its satellites is coming into sharp focus for all to see.

His eyes were opened when he and 11 other Baptist Men went behind the Iron Curtain in early December 1988 for two weeks. They were invited to visit Baptist churches in Poland and the Soviet Union—an opportunity to see firsthand what it means to be a follower of Jesus Christ in a communist country.

The 35-year-old father of four is busy in his church. He serves as a deacon, Sunday school teacher, Royal Ambassador director, Baptist Men president and chairman of the mission committee, which recently started an Hispanic mission.

Harris says his occupation is doing the will of the Lord, but he pays his bills as an oil field worker and carpenter.

He knew he would be singing and possibly giving his testimony on the trip, but he didn't know what he would see or experience.

"The believers are different, as different as east is from west. They are loving people."

God used Harris. He didn't have the opportunity to share his testimony. Only a few did. But God used him several times in crucial situations.

The first was when the group arrived in New York at John F. Kennedy International Airport and was told they had to have passport photos made for their Russian visas. Some of the group thought that the best solution was to shoot a roll of film and take it to a one-hour service near the airport. Harris prayed, then decided to call a photographer. On the first call he found a man who said he could be at the airport in 20 minutes.

"I asked the Lord to lead me to the right one," says Harris. The photographer was Joe Mohan, who was originally from Guyana.

"What is your group called?" he asked the Baptist laymen.

"We are a group of Baptist Men going to Poland and Russia," Harris said.

Mohan replied that he was a Southern Baptist, too. "While my family and I were living in Guyana, we encountered a Baptist missionary by the name of Charles Love. Through him, I came to know Jesus Christ," Mohan said.

God moved then and many more times in different ways on the trip.

Harris says it is difficult to go behind the Iron Curtain in countries like Poland and Russia and try to describe what you've seen. "Before I went, it was like a blind man trying to describe an elephant," he adds.

"This is not something I've seen on TV—I've been there. I've seen what it's like, and I know it's real."

Most people Harris will speak to will be like he was before the trip. "I had a general idea or a notion that all God's children were in Texas," he says.

"I used to think that way. But now they're all over the world and I have faces to go with names."

"Now I have more concern for God's children outside my vision. Now they're real. We can learn a great deal from the Polish and Russian believers in how they worship and pray."

"We have to appreciate the freedom we have in worship," continues Harris. "We are able to wor-

"I had a general idea...that all God's children were in Texas."

ship freely without fear of persecution or spies being among us."

"The prayers these people prayed were so fervent and full of reverence that it was humbling," he says. "I saw a man fall on his knees in a church in Russia and begin to pray and weep before God. I couldn't understand what he was saying, but I knew he was approaching God full out."

Harris was changed by what he saw. "I trust more in God than I did before," he says. "He is going to see us through. He saw us through Poland, Russia and back home."

Learning to trust God is difficult because we naturally want to trust in ourselves, he says.

"Before, it was what I can do, but now it's what God can do," says Harris.

Harris says that in the future, "there will be less complaining about my situation and more personal spiritual and family growth."

Like the man born blind, Harris was blind but now he sees. □

Steve Reece is a staff photographer with the Waco, Texas, *Tribune-Herald*.

LIFE LIVED BEHIND AN IRON CURTAIN

WITNESS OVERSEAS

Gienek Kupryjanow isn't looking for any curtain calls. Nor is he an actor on a stage called Poland. He's a born-again believer attempting to be a light in this place.

BY STEVE REECE

The sound of children's laughter punctures the morning silence. Two little ones scurry to the door as their mother enters carrying a package. A surprise has arrived from grandmother. They tumble over open the box. "Look, the best toys," they cry.

Their father sits patiently, watching and listening, as the mother unfolds knowing that soon he will play the part.

Soon becomes now when the sister approaches asking for help. The father reads a card and the two smile as he hurries off to pay.

The youngest crawls into his lap with a doll. He smiles and whispers something to her. She smiles back and scampers down to find her brother.

Love, family, home—this is a familiar scene. Yet the role Eugeniusz Kupryjanow must play is different. His life is lived out on a stage covered by an iron curtain in a theater called Poland.

He's not an actor in a communist troupe, but a born-again believer in Jesus Christ attempting to be a light in this place.

He's known as Gienek (pronounced Yen-tuck) to family and friends. And at 33 he and his wife, Barbara, live with their children, Adam and Kamila, on the second story of a house on Grodzka Street in the city of Bialystok. His parents live on the floor below.

The city, located in the northeast part of the country near the Soviet border, has a population of 300,000.



Eugeniusz Kupryjanow owns and operates a taxi cab business—one of the few private enterprises in Poland.

Poland is not a typical communist country. Even examined in the light of Mikhail Gorbachev's glasnost, Poland is different.

According to an evangelist who has worked in the Eastern Bloc countries for 20 years, the Poles hate communism and would love to see it fall.

Religion, free enterprise (with some restraint), and dissidents are found openly here. Religious tolerance is directly related to the popularity of the Roman Catholic Church. Baptists and other denominations comprise about ten percent of the religious population, while 90 percent are Catholic.

Gienek is in the minority. He is Baptist.

He came to know Jesus as his personal Savior in 1974 and was baptized at the Baptist church in Bialystok. Since that time he has done many things in his church, including directing the choir.

In 1980 he traveled to Toronto, Canada, to sing at a Baptist meeting. Presently he and his wife are part of a singing group that performs in Baptist churches throughout Poland.

Even in business Gienek is in the minority. He has his own private business—something per-

mitted but limited in Poland. He owns and operates a 10-year-old Mercedes diesel taxi cab that he bought in Germany.

This is also unusual. Few people in Poland own automobiles. Most depend on public transportation.

For Gienek, the taxi provides him with a good income and opportunities to witness.

"If I encounter someone who is interested in knowing about Jesus," he says, "I direct them to our church secretary. She will prepare a packet containing a Bible and other information they may

need to assist them in understanding the gospel."

Witness is different in Poland.

While it's not illegal to openly witness or distribute religious literature, there are some obstacles.

"It is difficult to walk up and witness to a Pole because they are mostly Catholic," he says. "If you ask them whether or not they know Jesus, they say they do."

"Their knowledge of Jesus is based on the church and its tradition," he continues. "They do not understand that we must personally receive



Above: Polish citizens line up outside of a church in Bialystok to receive food.

Below: Gienek and his family left to right: Barbara, 31; Gienek, 33; Janina, 60; Wlodzislaw, 64 (front); Kamila, 2; and Adam, 2.

His before we can know Him."

Gienek says it is difficult for them to see a need for Jesus, so it takes patience to witness to them.

"I must work slowly through the gospel to explain what it means to know Jesus," he says. "They must first see a difference in my life before they are able to see Him."

"I must work slowly through the gospel to explain what it means to know Jesus," he says. "They must first see a difference in my life before they are able to see Him."

This is why Gienek sees his life as a light in this place. He has many friends that do not know Jesus.

He is praying that through his life God will light the stage on which he must play so that others might see Him. □

Steve Reece is a staff photographer at the Waco Tribune-Herald in Waco, Texas.